

talk about attacking out-of-control Federal spending by making sure that there's no direct or indirect ability for resources from the Federal Government to go to NPR. Madam Speaker, I find that really a sad reflection on the current state of affairs.

National public broadcasting is one of the few areas where the American public can actually get balanced information. It's not the bloviators on the right or the left. Public broadcasting, because it is not taking commercial advertising, because it has a commitment to public service and balanced information, has been the most important, unbiased source available to Americans from coast to coast.

The Federal investment in public broadcasting is relatively minor. It is 10, 15 percent, when you add everything up, but it is an important portion because it leverages vast amounts of money that otherwise would not be available.

I, like my friend from Colorado, participate. I go to the telethons. I contribute every year from my family, and I'm glad to do it. You know, but if this agenda, which is where the Republicans who took over last time were trying to go, to defund public broadcasting, is picked up even before they take control is successful, it's going to have very serious consequences. It's not going to affect Denver. It's not going to affect Portland, Oregon, or San Francisco or New York except that the quality of some of the programs will erode, frankly, because these are tough times and sponsorship from the business community is down and individuals are having to stretch to be able to contribute. These services are more important than ever, when we've got all these screaming heads on the air giving forth information that is hardly balanced and accurate.

But what will happen? Not only the erosion of quality and some of the programs for culture and education that are not going to have a commercial base will be eroded. What is going to have the biggest impact, if they have their way, will be the areas of America that don't have the population base. Rural and small town America will pay the price.

Oregon public broadcasting is one of the finest public broadcasting systems in the United States, but the most expensive persons to serve are the people in the far reaches of our State, where we put up expensive translators to be able to get the programming out there. We have programming that is designed to reach to the furthest extent of our State, and that is subsidized. If we are going to lose the modest amount of Federal subsidization, it will not only affect the quality in Denver and Portland and Charlotte, in Atlanta, in Ithaca, but it's going to make it harder for rural and small town America to be able to get this vital service.

□ 1050

You look at the costs that they bear, that will be an area that will suffer the

cuts if we're not able to maintain funding. I think that's a tragedy. I think it is a tragedy to try to politicize NPR.

I'm not going to comment on the handling of the Juan Williams episode. There are others that have talked about it endlessly. The head of NPR indicated she would have handled it differently.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ARCURI. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. When you mix NPR and FOX News and you go back and deconstruct that, they have rules of journalism that they follow, that people are supposed to follow, and Mr. Williams had trouble following those rules before.

But notwithstanding that, the point is we need to have the public in public broadcasting. The Federal minuscule dollars that are invested in that compared to the amount of money that is wasted in defense, in agriculture subsidy pales by comparison. And I think we are going to be able to work with some of the new Members of Congress to deal with things that have defied reform in the past. I am looking forward to some of what they say.

But public broadcasting is a resource, is a treasure for Americans from coast to coast. It is trusted by more Americans than any other resource in terms of the news, and it is far more than just news. It is education. It is culture. It is history. And it would be a tragedy to eat away at NPR to make it harder to serve the difficult-to-reach areas of our country.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, our colleague from Oregon has just given us another example of how out of touch our colleagues across the aisle are. If he thinks that public radio is balanced and unbiased and our taking away that funding will have serious consequences, he is obviously not in touch with the American people. Republicans are in touch with the American people. That's why we're making this proposal. I live in a rural area, and I understand that.

Again, you're blaming the victim. You're blaming the voters. Please, don't blame the voters. That's not what they're looking for.

I now would like to yield 1 minute to my colleague from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS).

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, folks back home in Kansas have been forced to tighten their belts and rein in family budgets to weather tough times, and we don't understand why Washington isn't willing to do the same. The Federal Government should have only a few foundational duties. Among those are protecting our citizens, maintaining a strong infrastructure, and upholding our rights as outlined in the Constitution. Notably missing from this list is the funding of political radio shows, particularly those that operate with a litmus test.

The Federal Government is leaking money left and right, and it's time to

plug some holes. Today's YouCut proposal will save the American taxpayers over \$100 million and will be proof that Congress is ready to shrink the size and scope of the Federal Government.

I urge your support. Please oppose the previous question.

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment to remind my colleagues about the true purpose of this bill, which is to make sure that the Federal Government is taking the steps necessary to increase its ability to function, even in times of national emergencies, because that is what we are here in Congress to do—to make sure that the government continues to function, especially in times of national emergencies.

The bill requires Federal agencies to implement policies and practices to allow employees to telecommute. It requires them to train their employees about how to do their work remotely so that the Federal employees can continue to do their jobs, even if they can't get to work because of a natural disaster or other emergency.

There has been some discussion about the need to police telecommuting employees, so I want to talk about some of the oversight and accountability measures that this legislation contains.

This bill requires the Office of Personnel Management to provide teleworking assistance and guidance to agencies, to maintain a telework database, and to establish various research and reporting requirements.

The bill sets up a confidential hotline and email address to report abuses and requires the OPM to report to the Government Accountability Office about any abuse reports it receives.

Finally, the Senate amendment to H.R. 1722 also requires OPM to consult with the National Archives about how to manage and preserve all records from telework, including Presidential and Vice Presidential records, something that was raised by the Republicans in their motion to recommit back in July.

So, you see that there are oversight measures built into these telework policies. This bill doesn't just say to agencies, "Send your employees home." No. It directs the Federal agencies to set up policies and trainings so that their employees know how to work just as efficiently outside the office as they can at their desks in times of emergency, and those employees know that there is oversight by the agency of the work that is being done.

Those protections are included in this bill, just as they are in the telework policies used by companies in the private sector. That is why this bill makes common sense, because the Federal Government should be adopting policies like this that are commonly used in the private sector to make sure that our government functions efficiently and effectively, even during emergencies that prevent employees from coming into the office.